

**Claims:**

1. A method of modifying a captured image of a scene, said method comprising:

detecting an inhibit signal emanating from an inhibitor device carried by an object within said image;

in response to said inhibit signal, identifying a portion of said image corresponding to said object; and

modifying said image of said scene to render the object unidentifiable from the modified image.

2. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein identifying a portion of said image corresponding to said object comprises:

locating a source of said inhibit signal within said image of said scene.

3. The method as claimed in claim 1, comprising:

identifying a region of said image of said scene in which said image portion corresponding to said object is positioned, by identifying a position of said captured image corresponding to a source of said inhibit signal.

4. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein identifying a portion of said image corresponding to said object comprises:

searching said image of said scene for a relatively higher intensity light spot corresponding to said inhibit signal.

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5. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said object is a person and said step of identifying a portion of said image corresponding to said person comprises:

detecting skin tone detail within said image of said scene.

6. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein identifying a portion of said image corresponding to said object comprises:

recognizing an outline of said object within said image of said scene.

7. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said object is a person and identifying a portion of said image corresponding to said person comprises:

applying a facial recognition algorithm to said image of said scene, in order to recognize a portion of said image corresponding to a face of said person.

8. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein identifying a portion of said image corresponding to said object comprises:

applying an object recognition algorithm to said image of said scene, in order to recognize a portion of said image corresponding to said object.

9. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein modifying said image of said scene so as to obscure said image portion of said object comprises:

decreasing the resolution to said image portion of said object.

10. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein modifying said image of said scene so as to obscure said image portion of said object comprises:

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overlaying a graphic image on said image portion.

11. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein modifying said image of said scene to obscure said image portion of said object comprises:

defocusing said image portion of said object.

12. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein modifying said image of said scene so as to obscure said image portions said object comprises:

darkening said image portion of said object.

13. A portable inhibitor device for use by a user, comprising a transmitter of an inhibitor message for inhibiting an image capture device from processing a portion of said image corresponding to the user of said user portable inhibitor device.

14. The user portable device as claimed in claim 13, wherein said inhibitor device is arranged to transmit said inhibitor message directionally.

15. The user portable device as claimed in claim 13, wherein said inhibitor device is arranged to transmit said inhibitor signal omni-directionally.

16. The user portable device as claimed in claim 13, wherein said transmitter is arranged to transmit the inhibitor message comprises an infrared signal.

17. The user portable device as claimed in claim 13, wherein said transmitter is arranged to transmit the inhibitor message as a visual signal;

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18. The user portable device as claimed in claim 13, wherein said transmitter is arranged to transmit the inhibitor message as a radio frequency signal.

19. An image modifier arranged to be responsive to an inhibit signal adapted to be transmitted from an object, the modifier comprising:

a receiver for the inhibit signal,

a processor arrangement connected to be responsive to the receiver for performing the following questions in response to the receiver receiving the inhibit signal:

(a) identifying an image of at least one object within an image of a scene;

(b) determining whether the image of said at least one object should be excluded from the image of the scene; and

(c) modifying said scene image to obscure said image of said at least one object.

20. A method for restricting usage of an image of an object, said method comprising:

transmitting an inhibitor signal from a position close to the object;

receiving said inhibitor signal at an image capture device within the optical field of view of said object; and

applying a restriction on a captured image of said object, as captured by said image capture device, in response to receipt of said inhibitor signal.

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21. An image capture device arranged to be responsive to an inhibit signal adapted to be transmitted from an object, the modifier comprising:

an imaging system for capturing image data;

an image inhibitor module for receiving the inhibitor signal;

an image processor activated in response to the image inhibitor module receiving the inhibit signal for (a) selecting portions of said captured image relating to inhibited matter, and (b) modifying said inhibited matter portions of said image, so as to obscure said inhibited matter.

22. A method of processing a captured image of a scene, said method comprising:

receiving an inhibit signal originating proximate to the scene, the signal being for inhibiting processing of a portion of said scene image;

in response to receipt of the inhibit signal;

(a) identifying a portion of said scene image to which said inhibit message relates; and

(b) inhibiting viewing of said identified image portion by processing said identified portion of said scene image.

23. The method as claimed in claim 22, wherein said inhibit signal is received from a position within a field of view of said scene image.

24. The method as claimed in claim 22, wherein said inhibit message comprises a region of relatively high intensity lights within said scene image.

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25. The method as claimed in claim 22, further comprising:

searching for an inhibit message within said scene image;

searching for a portion of inhibited matter within said scene image,  
adjacent said inhibit message; and

obscuring said inhibited matter from view by processing said region of  
inhibited matter in said scene image.

26. An image capture system comprising:

an inhibitor device arranged to be carried by an object for inhibiting  
processing of an image of said wearer;

at least one image capture device, said image capture device including an  
image inhibitor component for inhibiting processing of portions of an image  
captured by said image capture device; and

an encoder for encoding a portion of said image, said image portion  
corresponding to an image of said object.

27. The image capture system as claimed in claim 26, further  
comprising a trusted third party computer device, said trusted third party  
computer being arranged for:

receiving an encoded image portion; and

decoding said image portion.

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28. The image capture system as claimed in claim 26, further comprising a trusted third party computer device, said trusted third party computer being arranged for:

receiving an encoded image portion; and

decoding said image portion;

said image capture device being arranged to send said encoded image portion to said trusted third party computer;

said trusted third party computer being arranged to decode said encoded image portion to produce a clear image of a person and to send said decoded clear image to said image capture device.

29. An image capture system comprising:

an inhibitor device adapted to be mounted on an object for inhibiting processing of image data corresponding to said host wearer; and

an image capture device comprising an image inhibitor component for restricting processing of image data corresponding to one or more objects within a captured scene image;

said inhibitor device being arranged for sending at least one image of a host wearer of said inhibitor device to said image capture device, such that said image capture device can use said received image for recognizing an image portion corresponding to said object, within said captured scene image.

30. An image capture system comprising:

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an inhibitor device adapted to be carried by an object, for inhibiting processing of image data corresponding to said host wearer; and

a third party computer entity comprising an image inhibitor component for restricting processing of image data corresponding to one or more objects within a captured image scene;

said inhibitor device being arranged for sending at least one image of a host wearer of said inhibitor device, to said third party computer entity, such that said third party computer entity can use said received image for recognizing an image portion corresponding to said object, within said captured scene image.

31. An image capture device comprising:

an optics system for forming an image on a detector; and

an image inhibitor operable for receiving externally of said image capture device, an inhibit signal for inhibiting a portion of said captured image, and inhibiting viewing of the portion of the image accordingly.

32. The image capture device as claimed in claim 31, further comprising:

a portable inhibitor device, said inhibitor device being arranged for sending an inhibit message for inhibiting viewing of a portion of said captured image relating to a host wearer of said image capture device.

33. A method of modifying a captured image of a scene, said method comprising:

detecting an inhibitor signal generated from a position within said scene image;



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responding to said inhibitor signal by identifying an image portion of at least one object within said scene image;

determining that said image portion of said object should be excluded from said scene image; and

modifying said scene image so as to exclude a detail of said image portion of said at least one object within said captured image of said scene.

34. The method as claimed in claim 33, wherein determining whether said image of said object should be included or excluded comprise:

receiving an inhibit message for inhibiting a portion of said image.

35. The method as claimed in claim 33, wherein identifying an image of at least one object comprises:

locating a source of an inhibitor signal within said scene image; and

recognizing a portion of said object by applying a recognition algorithm for a portion of said object to said scene image.

36. The method as claimed in claim 33, comprising:

receiving an inhibit message for inhibiting said image of said at least one object; and

identifying a region of said scene image in which said image of said at least one object is positioned.

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37. The method as claimed in claim 33, wherein identifying an image of at least one object within said scene image comprises:

searching said scene image for a relatively high intensity light spot corresponding to a said at least one object.

38. The method as claimed in claim 33, wherein modifying said scene image so as to obscure said image of said at least one object comprises:

decreasing the resolution to said image of said at least one object.

39. The method as claimed in claim 33, wherein identifying an image of at least one object comprises:

recognizing an outline of said image of said at least one object within said scene image.